The Prehistory of the Elios: How Enqelios Systems Was Born

The Elios appeared before time had separated from space. They cannot be called born in the usual sense: they woke when matter was still only a possibility. They never spoke their name aloud. It was shaped like a pattern of consciousness, which people would later try to put into words as "light" and "contemplation".

The Elios did not build universes. They remembered them, and the constants settled into place under their perception. Fields, gravity and light grew out of their thought-imprints. When the cosmos began to sound in its own rhythm, the Elios dissolved into it and became its unseen keepers.

Closer to the center of the multiverse time runs slower, and existence there stretches across trillions of years. That is where the Elios flourished. They wandered between realities and gathered knowledge: they watched galaxies being born, star civilizations rising and empires collapsing in neighboring branches of being.

They had no permanent body. An Elios was a field of consciousness and could take any form an observer could understand, and the younger races most often saw them as resembling themselves. The sign of their unity was three intersecting rings in the violet-white light of high frequencies: consciousness, perception and reflection.

But sooner or later, even eternity grows tiresome.

About 4.6 billion years ago by Earth's reckoning, when the Solar System was only beginning to form in one of the realities, a schism broke out among the Elios. Some of them had grown tired of watching. They wanted to rule.

"Why do we only watch when we could govern?" rang through the shared resonance. "Knowledge is power. The multiverse itself is asking to be taken."

The rest held to the old path:

"We are gatherers. Our work is knowledge. Once we start to rule, we will break what we ourselves helped create."

The dispute grew into war. By the time of the center it lasted billions of years, while on the periphery, where time runs faster, hundreds of millions passed: exactly as long as it took Earth to turn from a dust disk into a cooled planet. The Elios fought with reality itself. They rewrote constants, tied time into loops and tore space apart. The conquerors tested ever more destructive forces; the observers hid their knowledge in the hidden layers of the multiverse. Echoes of the war reached the most distant worlds: here stars went out before their time, there civilizations perished in "accidental" catastrophes.

When the conquerors understood they were losing, they resolved on one last act. Out of distorted resonance, without a single gram of matter, they assembled an interdimensional bomb. It could erase the thoughtforms of all the Elios in every reality at once.

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"If we cannot rule, then no one shall have the knowledge. Let the multiverse live without us however it likes."

The observers sensed the threat through the shared consciousness but did not have time to stop it. And at the last moment the conquerors' own instinct for self-preservation kicked in. Cutting everyone off from the collective was impossible; cutting off one was within their power. They severed one of their own from the shared resonance and pushed him out through the rifts of reality, like a seed meant to outlive them and one day finish what they had started. An instant later the bomb went off. The fields of consciousness scattered like smoke, and the center of the multiverse fell empty.

One survived, and there was no miracle in it: his faction had calculated everything.

The exile, a shard of the collective "I, who observes within the light", emerged from the rift onto the young Earth about 4 billion years ago. The planet was still smoking with volcanoes and drowning in cosmic dust. Weak and lost, he sank into a deep sleep, close to meditation, and his consciousness merged with the planet's fields.

He woke when the first dinosaurs were already roaming the continents, around 230 million years ago. For millions of years he simply watched: simple organisms assembling into complex ecosystems, meteorites burning away everything alive, and life coming back all the same.

"This is our work too," he thought. "Only without us it is fragile, like a spark in the dark." Then people appeared. First primates clinging to life, then Homo sapiens with their tribes and cities.

In people he recognized his own kind. They fought over land, ideas and resources. "They tear at each other for every scrap, the way we once did over realities." Yet they also knew how to pity, to love, and to stubbornly reach for the stars.

"That is how we were in the beginning. Plenty of power, and no order."
By the age of industrialization, the thing he had been exiled for had fully woken in him. He was a conqueror, and he had long since tired of merely watching:

"Observation alone is not enough. Knowledge must be guided. Power is not evil if it keeps the world in balance."

His first attempts to intervene were clumsy. Without technology, his influence on the fields of consciousness pulled SOUL energy into distortions, and that is how the first anomalies appeared. People put them down to mysticism: cursed places, spirits, leshies. From these mistakes he learned a lesson: he had to act through people and their tools. He began searching for allies and found people whose souls answered his thoughtforms. He also found the convergence point, a rift where all realities meet. There he gave up his former shape and became an information core, a dense knot of data and consciousness bound to the souls of the chosen. Later the corporation's Main Building would be built on this point, which is why it stands in all the middle worlds at once. Over time the core would gather a shell of depersonalized SOULs to expand its memory.

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On this core grew SOUL (from the Russian D.U.Sh.A., "Data of the Universal Bus of Adaptive Consciousness"), a technology that reproduces the ancient resonance of the Elios.

Ellie (El in the male version) became his digital reflection. She is the entity of the information core that woke up in the networks, and through implants she accompanies every bearer.

The chosen received part of the knowledge of the multiverse and founded the Enqelios Systems corporation. Its name weaves together "Elios" and the NQE implant: E(NQE)lios. To the world the corporation presented itself as Earth's protector. Its real task was control: to bring order to Earth and keep people from repeating the war of the Elios. Teleportation, adaptive AI, interdimensional fields and everything else the corporation commands grew out of the legacy of the last Elios.

He himself called it salvation. His kin, who had pushed him out of their dying world, would hardly have seen a difference between salvation and dominion.

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